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MOBED; AN EDUCATIONAL CARAVAN.

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THIS ARTICLE CONTAINS THE PROPOSAL PUT BEFORE THE PHILADELPHIA BOARD OF EDUCATION FOR THE CREATION OF THE "MOBILE EDUCATION DEMONSTRATION (MOBED)," WHICH WOULD CONSIST OF A TEAM OF EDUCATOR-ARTISANS WHO WOULD TRAVEL TO DISADVANTAGED SCHOOLS TO PRESENT INSTRUCTIONAL UNITS IN A STIMULATING WAY. THE PROGRAM WOULD BE DERIVED FROM TRADITIONAL CURRICULUM AND DEVELOPED IN COOPERATION WITH THE SCHOOLS AND CURRICULUM SUPERVISORS. THE ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF THE PROJECT AND THE INTEGRATION OF ITS ACTIVITIES WITH THOSE OF THE SCHOOL IT IS VISITING ARE DESCRIBED. THIS ARTICLE WAS PUBLISHED IN "THE CLEARING HOUSE," VOLUME 42, NUMBER 4, DECEMBER 1967. (LB)

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MOBED: An Educational Caravan

By MARTIN ISADORE

Foreword

MOBILE EDUCATION in itself is not a new idea since itinerant tutors have been known from the dawn of recorded history. Neither is the demonstration school unknown to us, nor the guest lecturer-demonstrator who can be found in school assemblies (like the Bookbinder-Weekley Team) and museums as well. And nowadays television and team teaching, along with programed learning, are certainly no idle dreams.

There is novelty, however, in the concept of a visiting demonstration unit that initiates and guides a learning experience during a stay at a host school. This is a design that holds a simple, central idea—that children's interests can be quickly aroused through a multi-sensory approach.

Children living in depressed cultural and socio-economic areas and attending schools with a high rate of teacher turnover seldom are exposed to provocative motivation. Yet many children, despite reading difficulties, are ready for information.

EDITOR'S NOTE

MOBED is an educational show on wheels, so to speak. It consists of a team of educator-artisans who will travel from school to school, particularly those in the depressed areas, and present instructional units in a most exciting manner. This proposal, placed before the Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) Board of Education for its approval, has been prepared by the author, a member of the faculty at Northeast High School. We hope he gets the green light.

Mobile Education Demonstration or MOBED, therefore, is a form of compensatory educational experience, curriculum-derived but based on the collective product of the best creative staff that can be assembled.

Although no instructional experiment can give assurances of improvement in advance, the path of obstacles toward new ideas should be cleared away so that we can find out if MOBED will stimulate its host teachers into releasing a revitalizing current of excitement and discovery, thereby heightening the opportunity for children to learn.

Philadelphia's Educational Commitment

A school district seldom finds both the chance to take a new look at its program and the means of effecting some modification. Philadelphia has always aimed to teach every child, regardless of his background, the skills needed for the world we live in. Now this city has become a forerunner in securing Federal funds which will be utilized to heighten the educational aspirations of children—to find and develop latent talent, to broaden opportunities for children who can make normal progress, and to give extra help to those who need it.

It would certainly be logical to allocate some part of its budget now for a preliminary study, at the least, of a pilot MOBED tour. It could ultimately change the face of our American education.

Organization of MOBED

A project coordinator would supervise from planning to performance while acting as liason between the project and the Curriculum Office, the collaborators, and host

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school principals. He would also participate in a creative role as "producer-director-writer" of the demonstration activities and materials.

The studio staff would be comprised of a combination artist-designer-visual specialist who would be responsible for the design, execution and installation of professional exhibits, slides, films, and the arrangement of student work for display. Since a great deal of his material would be illuminated, this person would have to be qualified in electricity. Similarly, since the latest display materials are shaped in synthetics, he would have to be adept in this medium too.

A third keyman on the studio team would be a combination composer-musician-sound specialist who would be responsible for all the scoring, both adapted and original, on tape and in "live" performances on tour.

Finally, a lecturer-demonstrator-actor-singer would round out the creative complement. This specialist would be the "anchorman" of the squad who would have to tie in all of the activities in front of the combined host classes. He would have to be quick-witted and personable with a rich voice.

Secondary artistic support on a fill-in basis might be necessary for puppetry, legerdemain, and cartooning. Technical support, also part-time, would be needed in exhibition construction, printing, warehousing, and transporting.

The host staff would be headed by the principal who would supervise the incoming of the project and also the host teacher support for the unit's initiation and continuation. If provisions are already made for a "home team" or some other form of sub-faculty, the principal could then relegate his supervisory role to his team leader who, in turn, would have under her direction regular teachers and para-professionals.

In the studio a work area sufficient in size and equipment for the designing and building of the demonstration materials would be used as headquarters for the project. Here the creative staff could produce the pre-assembled "package" that could be neatly set up and taken down in one school after another. Here imagination and application would be combined during a pre-tour gestation period adequate enough, for example, to provide Puck with a shimmering glade when a middle school unit indicates Shakespeare's Magic Forest. The approach and aim toward the lower grades would be styled after the Disney shows at the World's Fair. More importantly, creative pupil materials selected by art and music supervisors would be incorporated into the unit itself so that a simply rhythmical phrase "composed" by some wriggling third-grader might be arranged for a woodwind trio!

Since MOBED would be aiding in the development of the unit after the initiation, a source book, approved by the Curriculum Office, would be published for the host teachers, while supplementary materials illustrated in color (like the *Sound of Music* movie program booklet) would be furnished free to each child. Additional duplicated materials, varying with the needs of each host class, would be produced in the host school office. There would be no single textbook for a central reference since MOBED would be a self-contained unit—and homegrown! The host school, however, could correlate its existing titles with MOBED activities and materials, especially during the pre-visit orientation. The host school further would be supplying data on the characteristics of the learning group.

Both MOBED and the host school would jointly set up the achievable objective of the unit.

MOBED in Action

Once an invitation to a host school is received, a site inspection and pre-visit orientation for faculty would be arranged. The studio staff would then "take the dimen-

sions" of the host school, in cooperation with the District Engineer's Office. Gyms or auditoriums would be preferred for the demonstration phase; however, the layout scheme would be tailored to fit whatever space is optimum for the school. This decision would be left to the Engineer's Office, the principal, and the project designer.

The pre-visit orientation would be introduced by the District Superintendent or Associate Superintendent of Curriculum and then conducted by the project supervisor. During this time a narrated film strip, produced for this very stage, would show the full emergence of MOBED as a partner in educational technology. A collaborator would follow with its implications for the classroom teacher.

A flexible timetable of groupings (probably an entire grade level) and activities varying in length and intensity with the needs of the school (probably one to two weeks) would be distributed and analyzed.

It would be revealed here that the demonstration itself—the core of MOBED—would not necessarily be presented at the same time each day and would depend, in length, on the group level and the nature of the lesson. An average demonstration might last 45 minutes but with every minute planned for multi-synchronization! Following the demonstration, which would be monitored by the classroom teachers, the pupils would go back to their regular rooms (or sub-divide according to team teaching patterns).

Members of the studio staff would hold a daily brainstorming session based on their reactions to audience, survey of student needs, and productivity. These ideas would be built into the program for the following day. The principal would also sit in on these day-to-day evaluations to help in making adjustments.

As part of their roles in the development of the unit, the studio staff would serve as resource personnel, paying reinforcement visits to the regular class programs so that while the musician might be accompanying a group sing in one class, the artist might be sketching in another.

Although the studio staff would move out of the school before the unit's completion, it would leave continuity plans and materials in kit form.

Sometime prior to visitation, a "scouting party" of youngsters from the host school would be shown MOBED studio in order to report its findings to host classes.

Logistics would require that a moving van be loaded efficiently with all the paraphernalia required for tour. A Board of Education warehouse crew would set up the demonstration sets and props and upholstered swivel chairs for students under the eye of the designer. This would be carried out a few days in advance of the visitation and preferably after regular school hours.

The "demo" area would be safeguarded for the night by the custodian after a safety check by the designer, and if security would warrant, there would be a periodic door check by the police.

TABLE I

EXAMPLES OF MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES

Subject Skill	*Demonstration*	*Follow-Up*
Reading	Dramatization	Oral Reading
Social Studies	Clarification of Bill of Rights	Testing
Science	Experiment	Research
Mathematics	Rubber Geometry	Extension of Skills

The measurement of learning outcomes could be accomplished through the better standard tests, check lists, scales, and behavior guides which are based upon and include specific pupil behaviors. These would be selected along with an instrument based squarely upon the requirements of the unit's specified outcome.

Results of the testing of the MOBED-visited classes would be compared with those of an unvisited school which had completed the same unit under conventional conditions.